

## Valentina Wakeman



"I was born in London, but spent my childhood in Sao Paulo, Buenos Aires, Mexico City, Puerto Rico, and Miami before coming to Yale. My upbringing was both composed and defined by change. The only constants were the three other people living through it all with me. As a result, I am completed by my family, and am nothing without them. My brother is the centre of my life, my mom is my best friend, and my dad is my hero. Having each other was the only source of solid ground—especially when we felt most alone.

My parents have always put my brother and I first, without exception, and without question. I don't know if I have ever seen that kind of love in other people, or how I can repay them for that.

Moving around wasn't easy, but I can't be more grateful for having lived so much in such little time. It's fundamentally and irrevocably framed the way I see the world around me, and what I want to do with my life. I hope I can one day go back to Latin America and do my part to make it a better place. It is a region with such beautiful people, and such potential, that it bothers me when I see kids on the television feeling 'hungry for water', or that my mother has already lived through 4 economic crises. These are problems the majority of people face worldwide, but Latin America is my home. And I need to protect it.

On my first day at Yale, my mom left me a little note on my bed. I remember sitting down in my new common room, opening the note, and just crying. I think it was just the first time that I processed I felt a complete departure from my childhood. My roommate thought I was crazy (it's ok though, we're best friends now). I actually still have the note. I read it when I get homesick.

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Yale is my family, and my home now. I have found mentors wiser than I could have imagined, even though they are only one or two years older than me. I love dancing around to music (especially deep house, honestly I enjoy that to an absurd degree) with people who make me better every day. I don't know. I just really think there is so much to be happy about."

- Valentina Wakeman, writer for this semester's #HumansOfOISS series!

<https://www.instagram.com/p/BiXztwJBClp/> [1]

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